

Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park

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Kaloko-Honokōhau NHP News Release

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REQUESTS GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA DESIGNATION

Today the National Park Service filed a petition with the State of Hawai'i Commission on Water Resource Management (Water Commission) asking them to designate the Keauhou Aquifer of North Kona as a Water Management Area for groundwater. The National Park Service acted in order to seek the state's assistance in the careful management of culturally and environmentally significant water resources in and around Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park.

Water management areas are management units where the state Water Commission has established administrative control over the withdrawal of groundwater. Water management areas ensure the reasonable-beneficial use of the water resources in a manner consistent with the public interest. Currently in the Keauhou Aquifer the impacts of water withdrawal on the surrounding environment and public trust uses of water are not explicitly considered in the permitting of new wells. In designated water management areas, entities wishing to withdraw groundwater must show that their proposed uses are reasonable, beneficial, and are consistent with the public interest.

Groundwater availability is critical to support the purposes, values and resources for which the Park was established, as well as coastal ecosystems, fisheries, tourism, and recreation throughout the area. The anchialine pools, fishponds, tide pools, and the near shore environment are home to species such as limu (seaweed), `ama`ama (mullet), and `opae `ula (shrimp) prized by Native Hawaiians. The Park also provides habitat for endangered waterbirds such as the Hawaiian coot and stilt and candidate species such as two anchialine pool shrimp species and the orange-black Hawaiian damselfly . The continued health and existence of these biological resources depend on the continued flow of clean, abundant groundwater from mauka (upland) areas within the aquifer system.

Since the Park's establishment, substantial groundwater development has occurred within the Keauhou Aquifer. Despite six years of efforts by the Water Commission, the Park, and other stakeholders to address the potential impacts of proposed development at the Kona Water Roundtable and other venues, no plan has been produced to protect water-dependent cultural and natural resources from the cumulative effects of groundwater withdrawals. Given the sensitivity and importance of these resources and importance of water to all stakeholders, including the community living in this area, proactive management of groundwater withdrawals is urgently needed

"Ola i ka wai- water is life and the spirit of Kaloko- Honokōhau National Historical Park. We filed this petition because of our deep commitment to preserve and protect nationally significant resources and public trust uses that depend on fresh water," said Park Superintendent Tammy Duchesne. "We request the Water Commission begin the process of designating the Keauhou Aquifer as a Water Management Area for groundwater for this and future generations."

The Water Commission will have the opportunity to review the petition and investigate the information. Based on the review, they will determine whether to hold a public hearing in the area to take testimony from all interested parties on the idea of designation.

Kaloko- Honokōhau National Historical Park was established in 1978 to preserve, interpret, and perpetuate traditional Native Hawaiian activities, values and culture and to demonstrate historic land use patterns. For more information about the park, please visit http://www.nps.gov/kaho or call (808) 329-6881.